

North Halifax
Grammar School

Curriculum Policy

2020-2021



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Policy Owner	Vice Principal i/c Curriculum & Assessment

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The curriculum at North Halifax Grammar School (NHGS) reflects our ethos and aims. It is challenging, broad and balanced and knowledge engaged. At NHGS we believe that E.D Hirsch is right to argue that knowledge underpins and enables the application of skills; both are entwined. At NHGS we strive for academic excellence and also understand the importance of preparing students for life beyond these walls. Therefore, the curriculum at NHGS is designed to support the Living to Learn, Learning to Live ethos of the school.

At NHGS we are committed to a broad and balanced curriculum which, in accordance with our funding agreement, must include English, Maths, Science and RPSE. Should this still stay? Our curriculum is based on the most up-to-date research and guidance. At NHGS we are quite rightly proud of our curriculum and constantly evaluate its intent, implementation and impact in order to make further improvements.

At NHGS we set out to develop the very best historians, linguists and scientists, etc. Departments challenge students to think, act and behave as those working in their field would. Primarily we do this by building the academic vocabulary of our students and by ensuring that where possible students complete domain specific tasks. We also ask colleagues to regularly model their own thought processes to students. These metacognitive exercises give our students an insight into how experts in their fields would tackle certain pieces of work. We strive for the best and look to impart knowledge and skills beyond national curriculum guidelines and exam specifications.

The curriculum at NHGS goes far beyond what is taught in lessons, for whilst we want students to achieve the very best examination results possible, we believe our curriculum goes beyond what is examinable. At NHGS we strive to be the school everyone wishes they went to. Teachers use their 'hinterland' knowledge (Christine Counsell) to teach beyond the test, enriching students experiences and engaging students through fascination and challenge. For whilst the 'taught' or 'lesson based' curriculum is one component, the wider curriculum encompasses the totality of students' lived experiences at school, starting with the receptionist's smile and ending...who knows where? Because of this, the school is committed to building the Cultural Capital of all of our students, in particular, the most disadvantaged.

One of our curriculum strengths is that we help students to know more by remembering more, Learning in all subjects is carefully sequenced to help students recall knowledge. At NHGS we don't believe anything has been learnt unless it has been committed to long term memory. All colleagues are familiar with the five NHGS memory strategies; these are used regularly to help students remember the key knowledge they need to learn. The five strategies are low stakes quizzes, throw back lessons or parts of lessons, live modelling of a past exam question, lagged homework and self-quizzing using knowledge organisers where appropriate.

Our curriculum forms a backbone to our ethos statement which in turn develops the ideas behind the motto Living to Learn; Learning to Live and identifies the values, qualities and behaviours that we live by in the school. The letters E, C and M come from two sources, the phrase 'Every Child Matters' and from Einstein's famous quotation $E = MC^2$. These two sources reflect our belief in the importance of respect for every individual and in our tradition as a former specialist science college.

The development of nine key values and their associated behaviours are key to our ever evolving curriculum. Whilst students gain knowledge, we also wish them to become learners who are enquiring, enthusiastic, engaged, creative, confident, co-operative, mindful, motivated and mannerly.



The school curriculum should enable all learners to:

- Satisfy future economic needs for individuals and for the workforce as a whole, including the development of secure knowledge and skills in communication, literacy and mathematics, and confidence in acquiring new knowledge and skills;
- Help students to appreciate the national cultures, traditions and values of the UK, whilst recognising diversity and encouraging responsible citizenship;
- Provide opportunities for participation in a broad range of educational experiences and the acquisition of knowledge and appreciation in the arts, sciences and humanities;
- Support personal development and empowerment so that each student is able to develop as a healthy, balanced and self-confident individual and fulfil their educational and personal potential.

Of course it is our intention to lay secure foundations for progression into Further and Higher Education and we consider preparation for Sixth Form Advanced Level study to be a key feature of our 11-16 education. Additionally, from the beginning of Year 7, students begin to receive specific careers guidance through RPSE lessons and other sources. This continues throughout school and is a real strength of our curriculum. Our curriculum also includes a wide variety of enrichment activities and extracurricular trips.

Furthermore, lessons are taught by highly qualified staff who are subject experts. Departments are well resourced and have detailed schemes of work across all Key Stages.

The curriculum offer at NHGS consists of:

Key Stage 3

In Key Stage 3, students follow a broad and balanced curriculum. Subject experts have planned units of work that intend to develop both skills and knowledge. Programmes of study for every subject are published on the school website.

- **Year 7** students follow courses in English, Maths, Science, French, RE, Geography, History, RPSE, ICT, Art, Design & Technology, Music, and Cultural Studies

- **Year 8** students follow courses in English, Maths, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, French, Spanish, PE, Geography, History, RPSE, Art, Design & Technology, ICT, Music, and Cultural Studies
- **Year 9** students follow courses in English, Maths, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, French, Spanish, PE, Geography, History, RPSE, Art, Technology, ICT and Music.

Key Stage 4

At KS4 we remain committed to a broad and balanced but challenging curriculum.

In Year 9, students select their GCSE courses which they will take in Years 10 and 11. All Year 9 students are provided with advice throughout the school year to help guide them about their GCSE options. The only exception to this is that we ask our students at the end of Year 8 to decide whether they wish to continue with both languages into Year 9. Those students who opt to carry on one language start their GCSE in RS early, with dual linguists starting the GCSE at the beginning of Year 10. Year 9 students have opportunities to talk through their choices with their Student Progress Tutors and a member of the Leadership Group. Further advice comes from a careers unit of work in RPSE and presentations in assemblies. This is followed by a special parents' evening (Key Stage 4 Options Evening) where careers options for each student are also discussed.

The GCSE examinations are completed at the end of Year 11 and include a core of:

- English Literature, English Language, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, (three Separate Sciences), or Trilogy Science (2 GCSEs equivalent), MFL (either Spanish or French) and Religious Studies;
- Students also choose two GCSEs from the following optional subjects. Choice is guided with every effort made to ensure students choose the right course for them

Art (Fine Art or Graphic Communication (not offered in 2020-2021)), Business Studies, Computing, Food Preparation and Nutrition, French, Spanish, Geography, History, Physical Education, Psychology, Design & Technology (Product Design), and Music.

Most students achieve 10 full GCSE qualifications in total. In addition, students follow non examination courses in PSHE and PE. From 2020 Religious Studies is an early entry GCSE that will be taken at the end of Year 10 by our students.

Key Stage 5

In the Sixth Form students choose from up to 25 different linear A Levels. All courses are advertised to students when they apply in the autumn term, but courses are offered, subject to demand. All students receive one to one guidance sessions on enrolment. In addition, taster sessions are provided during Year 11 to aid understanding and inform choices. Most students opt for three subjects, though a few choose four.

The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is also on offer. Students find studying individual projects in depth beneficial. Students also have to present their evaluations and findings to an audience. The EPQ qualification perfectly illustrates the commitment to development of both knowledge and skills here at NHGS.

The curriculum at Sixth Form also includes by PSCHEE and in Year 12 a core Enrichment afternoon. PSCHEE continues to develop the life skills of students and is used to help students prepare for UCAS or a career outside of NHGS. Enrichment provides our students with a wide variety of opportunities; these include The Duke of Edinburgh Award, Debating, Young Enterprise, Music, Sport, Work Experience, volunteering in Primary Schools, car maintenance and cooking.

Year 12 Options for –2020-2021

Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D	Column E
Business Studies Biology Chemistry English Literature French Media Studies Physics Design & Technology (Product Design)	Art Biology Government & Politics Mathematics (4 groups) Psychology	Biology Economics English Language Further Mathematics Photography PE Psychology RS	Chemistry Computing English Literature Geography Physics Sociology	Biology Business Studies Chemistry Electronics History Music Spanish

Year 13 Options for –2020-2021

Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D	Column E
Art Biology English Language Mathematics Psychology Design &Technology (Product Design)	Business Studies Chemistry English Literature Geography Physics Sociology	Biology Chemistry French Government & Politics History Media Studies	Biology Business Studies Chemistry Computing Further Mathematics PE Spanish	Biology Economics Electronics English Literature Photography Psychology RS